(c) whether Government have received any proposal in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the action taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Coconut Development Board under Ministry of Agriculture has been promoting tender Coconut Water as a health and functional food in place of other artificial drinks. Coconut Development Board in association with Defence Food Research Laboratory (DFRL), Mysore has developed a technology for preservation and packing of tender coconut water in pouches and aluminium cans without loss of its inherent qualities and taste. The shelf life of this product is 6 months under ambient conditions and 1 year in refrigerated conditions. The Board has transferred this technology to 8 entrepreneurs. The Board has financed 5 processing and preservation units of Tender Coconut Water in the States of Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and West Bengal. The Board also undertakes the promotional activities through electronic and print media and also participates in exhibitions, trade fairs etc. regularly.

Under plan scheme being operated by Ministry of Food Processing Industries, assistance is provided for setting up/expansion/modernisation of food processing industries. The assistance will be in the form of grant subject to 25% of the cost of plant & machinery and technical civil works up to maximum of Rs. 50 lakhs in General Areas and 33.33% upto Rs. 75 lakhs in difficult areas. Fruits & vegetable processing units using coconut as raw material are also eligible for assistance under the scheme.

(c) to (e) No proposal seeking financial assistance for processing of Coconut Water is pending with the Ministry.

Special scheme for education of Dalits

†*267. SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE:
SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that with a view to impart better education to Dalits of the entire country Government are preparing a special scheme;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have held any discussion with various State Governments in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) Government's contribution in the above scheme and the extent of it?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH): (a) to (e) No, Sir. Substantial benefits are already being extended to SC students in the existing schemes of the Ministry of Human Resource Development. Details of important schemes are given below:

(i) Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs) is a scheme launched in July, 2004 for setting up residential schools at upper primary level for girls belonging predominantly to the SC, ST, OBC and minority communities. The scheme is being implemented in educationally backward blocks of the country where the female rural literacy is below the national average and gender gap in literacy is above the national average. The scheme provides for a minimum reservation of 75% in admissions to girls from SC, ST, OBC or minority communities. For the remaining 25%, priority is accorded to girls from families below poverty line. The pattern of financing is 75:25 ratio of sharing between the Centre and the States during the Tenth Five Year Plan.

(ii) Kendriya Vidyalayas (KVs) reserve 15% and 7.5% seats for SCs and STs respectively in fresh admissions. No tuition fee is charged from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes students up to class XII.

(iii) Navodaya Vidyalayas (NVs) reserve seats in favour of children belonging to SCs and STs in proportion to their population in the concerned district provided that no such reservation will be less than the national average of 22.5% (15% for SCs and 7.50% for STs) but subject to a maximum of 50% for both the categories (SCs & STs) taken together.

(iv) A special provision of Rs. 15 lakhs is available per district per annum for meeting local needs of SC/ST students under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

Shortage of electricity in Maharashtra

*268. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is acute shortage of electricity in Maharashtra;

(b) if so, the quantum of load shedding; and

(c) the possible steps/solutions the State and Central Governments are taking in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI SHUSHILKUMAR SHINDE): (a) Yes, Sir, Maharashtra has been facing energy as well as peak shortage. During the month of November, 2006, the average energy shortage in Maharashtra was 22.1% and the peak shortage was 25.2%.

(b) According to Maharashtra State Electricity Transmission Corporation Limited (MSETCL), the load shedding in Maharashtra has been in the range of 3,500 to 4,500 MW.

(c) Electricity is a concurrent subject. Supply and distribution of electricity in a State is the responsibility of the State Government/State power utility concerned, which decides the priorities of power supply to various categories of consumers/areas in the States. Government of India supplements the efforts of the State Government by way of generation capacity addition and establishment of bulk transmission system in the Central Sector through Central Public Sector Undertakings.

The following steps/measures have been taken by the Central and State Government to mitigate shortage of electricity in Maharashtra:

- Allocation of power from new Central Generating Stations (CGSs).
- Allocation of power from unallocated power of CGSs.
- Supply of power from RRGPPL Dabhol Project.
- Supply of power from Kayamkulam GBS in Southern Region.
- Bilateral power purchase from other sources.
- Addition of generating capacity in the State Sector.